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this fact, Mr. Longfellow's poetic, as well as prose style, is indebted for much of its descriptive charm.

The earlier pieces, which make the second division of the volume, are already well known to the readers of poetry. They are beautiful compositions, characterized by good taste, a flowing and easy versification, and quiet and gentle feelings; but they are occasionally rather timid and subdued, and show here and there traces of the influence of the recent schools of English poetry; an influence perfectly natural, and almost irresistible to a youthful poet's mind. They show the same nicely attuned ear, the same lively susceptibility, the same descriptive powers, though not fully unfolded, that have appeared in his later productions.

The last division consists of a series of translations from various modern languages. The first is the well-known version of the "*Coplas de Manrique*," from the Spanish; a poem that has been justly admired, both in the original and in the translation. Mr. Longfellow's version is much superior to Dr. Bowring's, both in elegance and fidelity. The passages translated from Dante keep pace, line for line, and even word for word, with the Italian; and, when we consider the severe grandeur of the stern old poet, the condensation and fire of his expression, the piercing flashes, that break out from single immortal words in his poem, we must confess, that to render him with tolerable spirit and fidelity, is a work of uncommon talent; but to unite the closest fidelity to the sense and the forms of the original, with an easy movement in English verse, is enough to task the best powers of genius. These fragments are followed by translations from the French, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and German, all of which are executed with a high degree of skill. We cannot, however, forbear a word of protest against a form of speech, here occasionally used, which is threatening to invade us from Germany; we mean, the omission of the personal pronoun, as, "*Am a prince of mighty sway*" (p. 138). It is too foreign to the English idiom to be defensible, even in a translation; and it demands notice so much the more, as translations are notoriously the great corrupters of the purity of a language.

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3. — *A Wreath of Wild Flowers from New England*, by FRANCES SARGENT OSGOOD. London: Edward Churton. 1838. 12mo. pp. 364.

THE poems in this volume are mostly of the kind called fugitive. They are marked by the usual defects of poems of this class, but the defects are compensated by more than the

usual merits and beauties found in them. In fact, these hasty productions of our countrywoman show uncommon liveliness of fancy, a ready and flowing style, and very happy descriptive powers. But of her poetical genius, it would be unfair to judge from these specimens. Written as they were, from time to time, for various periodical publications, a critical eye cannot but observe grave defects, which a more elaborate method of composition would have removed. The author occasionally falls into a confusion of metaphors; for instance where she says,

“Farewell, my bark! yet once again
I would my wish might guide thee still,
To clear the pirate critic's den,
Who'd blight thy tender freight at will.”

Perhaps the idea of a critic confused the fair writer's imagination. She personifies her book as a ship, and the critic, naturally enough, as a pirate; but next she would have the ship clear his *den*; was she thinking of a wild beast or a pirate? and would either have a *den* in the ocean on which her ship was launched? Not satisfied with this, she next figures the Proteus of a critic as a *frost*, — we suppose so, at least, — and then, this frost blights, — not the flowers of poesy, but the “freight” of the ship. We do not find fault with the taste of the separate metaphors. We do not insist that a critic is neither a pirate, nor a monster, nor a blighting frost, but a very harmless and Christian-like sort of person. It is the confusion of figures only, to which we object.

These poems abound, also, too much in such splendid and dazzling things as jewels, pearls, golden locks, and flashing eyes. These do well in their places, but ought to be sparingly used, take a whole volume together. One is exceedingly apt to write about such matters in the annuals; — the style is an epidemic, and very catching. All proper preventive measures ought to be taken against it. We should like to draw a *cordon sanitaire* against all British annuals whatever; or, at least, to establish a quarantine for the benefit of our poets and poetesses. There are, besides, certain pet words and phrases constantly recurring in these poems; for instance, “the while” ends, we know not how many lines, — and rarely has any particular meaning, but serves merely to be rhymed with. The author has often been led astray by mere jingle, and uses prettily sounding words and combinations of words, which, when analyzed, add nothing to the sense of the stanza. This is a fault which lively young

writers, especially poets, are very liable to fall into. There is no help for it, but careful elaboration ; repeated and severe revision ; for it is an old maxim, that what is easy writing is hard reading. We suppose our author's principles of composition are expressed in the following pretty "Lines on a Poetess, who was advised to write less rapidly."

"Her muse is like the bird, that roves
Through Eastern India's fragrant groves ;
His trembling plumage burns in flight, —
A living rainbow, rare and bright !
And swifter as those pinions fly,
More warm the glow, more rich the dye ;
But when, with slow and measured wave,
They fall upon the balmy air,
The hues his lightning-motion gave
Grow dim, and fade unnoticed there.
And when he furls those changeful wings,
All wearied with his glorious play,
Ah ! one by one the shining rings
Of radiant color die away !
And dark and dull, you ne'er would know
The wealth of glory lost below ;
That every shadowy plume you see,
Still wears its own resplendent hue ;
And once again, unfurled and free,
Would flash its treasure on your view.
Her muse is like the sun-lit bird, —
Then bid her not its wanderings stay,
Lest all the light that flight has stirred, —
Like his, — in rest should die away." — pp. 239, 240.

Now this is all false philosophy, and a dangerous doctrine to get into a poet's head. No work for immortality was ever yet produced, either in poetry or art, without patient, unwearyed toil ; careful and scrutinizing revision ; laborious finishing, like that of a piece of sculpture. A thousand faults escape the sharpest eye in a first draft ; and a work with a thousand faults upon its head will hardly live long enough even to be rejected by posterity. Even Shakspeare, as the late inquiries have shown, worked up the noble passages in his plays with the minutest and most anxious care. But there is no need to multiply authorities. The history of genius in poetry and art affords but one testimony, and whoever neglects its warning voice, will never have a place there.

We have spoken thus, because we are satisfied, that the author of this volume has every requisite for a poet of a very high order ; and such a person ought not to be spoken to in the language of indiscriminating flattery, as we fear has

been too generally the case. We are satisfied, that she has all the talent, imagination, and command of language, needful to enable her to confer honor on American literature ; but having, as we suppose she has, adopted wrong principles of composition, we have felt it to be our duty to allude to the defects which naturally spring from such principles and methods as hers.

But the lover of poetry will find in this volume many pieces marked by the utmost tenderness and delicacy. The sentiments of friendship, the love and longing for home in a strange land, and the impressions made on an imaginative mind by works of art, are frequently, in this volume, the themes of harmonious and beautiful strains. And, after all the deductions which we have thought proper to make above, there still remains enough poetry unassailable by criticism to fill a good-sized volume.

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4. — 1. *Elements of Modern Geography, with an Atlas*. By J. E. WORCESTER. Improved Edition. Boston : David H. Williams. 1839. 12mo. pp. 257.
2. *Elements of Ancient Classical and Scripture Geography, with an Atlas*. By J. E. WORCESTER. Boston : David H. Williams. 12mo. pp. 74.

THAT a school-book of real merit, free from pretension and quackery, should be popular enough to be stereotyped for the third time, is a phenomenon the more interesting from its rarity. Mr. Worcester's well-known accuracy of research gives a value to his books, which all can understand and appreciate ; he has selected the most useful information, and condensed it into the smallest compass. Were all authors to imitate the excellent example he has set them, our lightened book-shelves would rejoice, though the sellers might repine. In such a literary millennium, the reviewer would be deprived of his favorite employment, and critiques, *proh pudor !* would degenerate into puffs.

In the Mathematical Geography, Mr. Worcester has, with much propriety, confined himself to a mere vocabulary of terms. The first steps of this science would be incomprehensible to the young students, for whose use these works are prepared. Even the simple problems of finding the latitudes and longitudes of places involve the whole science of Nautical Astronomy ; and the theory of the Earth's figure is of such abstruseness and intricacy, as to perplex the pro-